It's not all about money

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If you listened to the predictions of the sixties, we should now be living in the "age of leisure."

Computers would be doing all of the work — or so we were told. Newsweek, for example, predicted in a 1962 article that most of us would be working two hours a day, three days a week.

Hah. Such predictions now seem quaint, given that most of us are working harder than ever.

One of the problems has been technology itself. Rather than being tools of enrichment, technology and the era of the Internet have led to some people becoming enslaved to their jobs and their careers. Cellphones, e-mail, home computers — the ability to separate work from personal and family time has become much more difficult.

While it's a great thing for a company to provide you with a laptop, it comes with a big downside. Sure, you can do some work late at night in the comfort of your own home, rather than having to stay around the office. But ask yourself this question: Are you ending up losing too much personal time as a result? Do you know the difference between how much technology lets you work and how much you should work?

The problem of technology encroaching upon our time is made worse because our modern day role models — "21-year-old dot-com millionaires" — are those who have managed to destroy whatever barriers may have existed between career and personal time. The entire buzz of the past few years seems to be that we need to become rich, and we can do so if we simply go at the idea of the Internet career with an overwhelming zeal.

I've come to believe that in order to ensure long-term survival in the digital world, you have to learn how to strike a balance between your career and your personal life.

I work hard to unplug myself, and to be honest, it is not easy what with the technology that surrounds me. But I know that it is important.

I had an Internet-enabled cellphone a few months ago, and one day, I decided I hated it. Why? Because I found myself reading my e-mail on a Saturday morning while at a bakery — and realized how absolutely stupid that was.

Last week, I read a bizarre letter-to-the-editor in a popular e-commerce magazine, in which one fellow was indicating that by carrying around 13 wireless devices, computers and personal digital assistants, he was far more in touch than another fellow who had only eight such devices.

While the current business culture may lead many to think that such connectivity makes people masters of the universe, my own opinion is different.

What losers!

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